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Cultural Resources and Developing Community Tourism in Vietnam

Nguyen Thi Thu Trang¹,

Abstract

The development of each country relies on many resources, including cultural resources - the spiritual foundation of society, both diverse and tangible, intangible; cultural products are expressed in the form of material products, spiritual products. Vietnam has a long history of development with cultural diversity of residential communities - diverse indigenous cultures; and many cultural heritages - scenic spots, historical relics, becoming a great advantage in cultural resources to implement development goals, including the goal of developing community tourism. On that basis, many localities in Vietnam have developed community tourism, making an important contribution to economic growth and implementing social development management goals. This study addresses cultural resources in two contents, including cultural heritage, indigenous culture; and assesses the impact of cultural resources on community tourism development. The theoretical framework is built with a 3-scale model in the direction of assessing the practical development of community tourism and the impact of cultural heritage and indigenous culture on community tourism development. The author conducted a survey of 570 leaders of local authorities at the commune level and leaders of cultural and tourism organizations in 3 provinces of Vietnam - localities with advantages in cultural heritage and indigenous culture to develop community tourism, including Son La province (North), Quang Nam province (Central), Ben Tre province (South). From the results of the above empirical research, the author draws scientific conclusions and discusses policy issues that can be applied to Son La, Quang Nam province, Ben Tre province and many localities in Vietnam.

Keywords: Development of community tourism; Cultural heritage; Indigenous culture; Vietnam.

Introduction

Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia, has a long history of development with cultural diversity of residential communities - diverse indigenous cultures: 54 ethnic groups have lived together stably for a long time in the territory (Ngan, N.T., 2023). In addition, Vietnam has many cultural heritages - scenic spots, historical relics, becoming a great advantage in cultural resources for developing community tourism (Hien, D.Q., 2023).

The Vietnamese ethnic community consists of 54 ethnic groups living in the territory; each ethnic group has its own cultural identity, creating cultural diversity but is managed in a unified manner, becoming the internal strength of Vietnam. In addition, natural conditions with many scenic spots; development over thousands of years with many official state dynasties, have formed many relics and cultural heritages recognized by the state. In addition, human resources for the Vietnamese tourism industry have made significant progress, of which 45% are trained in tourism, 35% are trained in other majors (Huyen, N.T. et al., 2023). These are the forming factors and important resources for exploiting tourism products, including community tourism, contributing to the implementation of the economic, cultural and social development goals of the country and localities in Vietnam.

¹Department of Chinese Practice, Faculty of Chinese, Thuongmai University, Vietnam. Email: trang.ntt@tmu.edu.vn. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1353-8348>.



With these advantages, Vietnam has built and implemented a tourism development strategy with the viewpoint: Developing tourism to truly become a spearhead economic sector, creating a driving force to promote the development of other sectors and fields, contributing significantly to the formation of a modern economic structure; promoting the advantages of natural and cultural resources; developing diverse tourism products, expanding the market and improving the competitiveness of Vietnam's tourism (PM, 2020).

Literature Review

Community tourism was initially known from spontaneous groups organizing tours of rural areas and villages to learn about cultural heritages (historical relics, ecosystems, scenic spots, etc.), indigenous culture (customs, practices, festivals, traditional products, etc.). Gradually, the need to explore cultural heritages and indigenous culture increased, forming information services to meet the needs of tourists to learn and explore, and community tourism appeared as a type of tourism, affirming its significance for the development of the tourism industry and for the socio-economic development of the country and locality.

The current popular understanding of community tourism is that it is a type of tourism based on the exploitation of natural and cultural advantages, including cultural heritage and indigenous culture. Originating from the diversity and characteristics of the culture of indigenous communities, community tourism products are also very diverse and have potential for developing the tourism economy. According to People's Newspaper (2022), community tourism is a type of tourism exploited based on indigenous cultural values; Vietnam, with its strengths in natural landscapes, unique culinary culture, friendly and open people, has been assessed by experts as being able to become a world-leading country in developing community tourism, if developed in the right direction and well managed. STC (2024) defines community tourism as a type of tourism with the participation of local communities in the supply chain and management. According to this approach, STC (2024) explains in detail: The community tourism model is formed and developed based on the potential of inherent cultural values and is exploited and organized by local people; tourists will experience the lives of local people, be provided with accommodation and participate in community activities.

The above studies also emphasize the role of community tourism development, that the development of community tourism is an opportunity for tourists to learn and explore cultural heritage, indigenous culture... The above research views and contents are also consistent with the practice of community tourism development in Vietnam, similar to legal regulations (VNA, 2017), that: Community tourism is a type of tourism developed on the basis of cultural values of the community, managed, organized and benefited by the community. And thus, it is possible to identify some main characteristics of community tourism: Local residents are the subject of developing and managing community tourism; Cultural heritage, indigenous culture is the basic factor for forming and developing community tourism. Accordingly, local residents organize and manage community tourism activities suitable to the needs of tourists based on inherent advantages of cultural heritage, indigenous culture... and this organization and management is in accordance with general provisions of law.

With the above explanation, when implementing the community tourism development strategy, localities need to encourage and support people to exploit the values of cultural heritage and indigenous culture to create diverse and unique community tourism products. Encouragement and support can be implemented in many ways, such as fostering knowledge and skills in

community tourism management and development; supporting people to propagate, promote and promote investment in community tourism; encouraging and supporting investment in infrastructure and technology for community tourism development. That not only helps people develop their personal and household economies, but also contributes to protecting and preserving cultural values and promoting local economic and social development. With that meaning, the scale "Development of community tourism" (DCT) is designed to imply the following contents: Localities encourage and support people to exploit cultural heritage values and indigenous cultures to develop diverse community tourism products (DCT1); Localities encourage and support people to improve their knowledge and skills in managing and developing community tourism; encourage and support trade promotion and investment in infrastructure and technology for community tourism development (DCT2); Developing community tourism helps people develop their personal and household economies; contributing to protecting and preserving cultural values and promoting local economic and social development (DCT3).

From the identification characteristics of community tourism as mentioned above, that local residents are the subject of developing and managing community tourism; cultural heritage, indigenous culture is the basic factor for forming and developing community tourism, so the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage values, indigenous culture is the basic requirement, prerequisite for developing community tourism. With that meaning, this study establishes the viewpoint and hypothesis, which are: *Cultural heritage (H1) Indigenous culture (H2) is the condition for forming and has a direct impact on the Development of community tourism.*

Firstly, cultural heritage is a factor that attracts tourists and is considered a natural resource, an important resource for developing community tourism. This resource is diverse, including tangible cultural heritage (historical and cultural relics, scenic spots, etc.) and intangible cultural heritage (folk songs, folk rituals, etc.). When cultural heritage resources are diverse, unique and preserved, they will attract tourists to explore and experience. With that meaning, the scale "Cultural heritage" (CH) is designed to imply the following contents: The locality has advantages in historical and cultural relics, scenic spots, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism (CH1); The locality has diversity and characteristics in traditional culture of residential communities, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism (CH2); Historical and cultural relics, scenic spots and traditional culture of residential communities are preserved, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism (CH3).

Second, indigenous culture is the core content, reflecting the characteristics of the communities living in the territory. This is an important resource, a factor that attracts tourists to learn, explore, and experience when participating in community tourism activities. This resource is diverse, including unique cultural features of customs, practices, traditional products, production experience, arts, etc. of indigenous communities. When indigenous cultural resources are diverse, unique and preserved, they will be the main raw material for producing many community tourism products; attracting tourists to explore and experience. With that meaning, the scale "Indigenous culture" (IC) is designed to imply the following contents: Customs and practices of local communities are diverse and unique, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism (IC1); Traditional products, production experience, culture and arts of local communities are diverse and unique, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism (IC2); Customs, practices, traditional products, production experience,

culture and arts of local communities are preserved, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism (IC3).

With the above overview study, the author has built a theoretical framework on community tourism development including a model of 3 scales: 02 independent scales/variables "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC) and 01 dependent scale/variable "Development of community tourism" (DCT). The scales include 9 observed variables, designed by the author corresponding to 9 questions in the survey and measured by a 5-level Likert scale: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No opinion; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Theoretical framework

No	Scales	Encode	Rating levels				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	Cultural heritage	CH					
1	The locality has advantages in historical and cultural relics, scenic spots, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism	CH1					
2	The locality has diversity and characteristics in traditional culture of residential communities, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism	CH2					
3	Historical and cultural relics, scenic spots and traditional culture of residential communities are preserved, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism	CH3					
II	Indigenous culture	IC					
4	Customs and practices of local communities are diverse and unique, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism	IC1					
5	Traditional products, production experience, culture and arts of local communities are diverse and unique, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism	IC2					
6	Customs, practices, traditional products, production experience, culture and arts of local communities are preserved, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism	IC3					
III	Development of community tourism	DTC					
7	Localities encourage and support people to exploit cultural heritage values and indigenous cultures to develop diverse community tourism products	DTC1					
8	Localities encourage and support people to improve their knowledge and skills in managing and developing community tourism; encourage and support trade promotion and investment in infrastructure and technology for community tourism development	DTC2					

No	Scales	Encode	Rating levels				
			1	2	3	4	5
9	Developing community tourism helps people develop their personal and household economies; contributing to protecting and preserving cultural values and promoting local economic and social development	DTC3					

Source: Compiled by the author through the review

Research Model

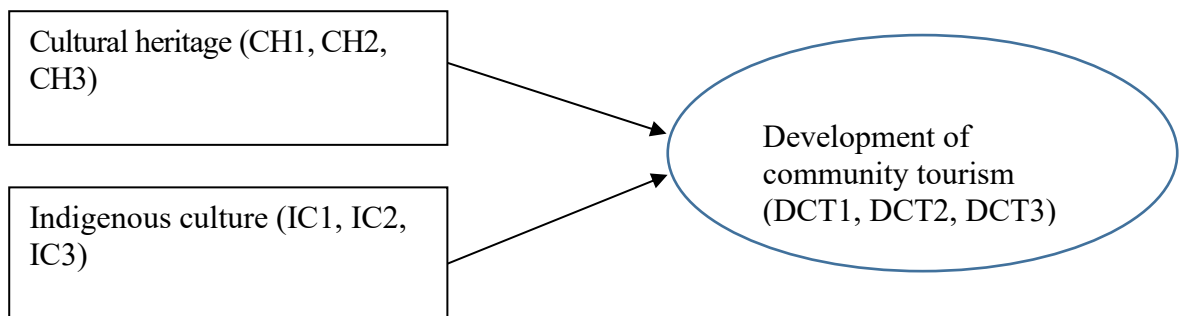


Figure 1. Research model

Research Methods

This study evaluates the practice of community tourism development based on a survey in some localities in Vietnam. With the above objective, the author uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to obtain accurate and objective empirical research results.

- Qualitative method: Used by the author through collecting and analyzing secondary data to build a research model, including 02 independent scales/variables "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC) and 01 dependent scale/variable "Development of community tourism" (DCT).

- Quantitative method: The author used primary data collection and analysis by surveying 570 local government leaders at the commune level and leaders of cultural and tourism organizations in 3 provinces of Vietnam - localities with advantages in cultural heritage and indigenous culture to develop community tourism, including Son La province (North), Quang Nam province (Central), Ben Tre province (South). The survey was conducted in two steps: Preliminary survey and official survey.

+ Preliminary survey: The theoretical framework for the study was built with 3 scales and 9 observation variables. According to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), the minimum sample size required for quantitative research on this model is $N = 9 \times 5 = 45$. The author conducted a preliminary survey with a sample size of $N = 190$ local government leaders at the commune level and leaders of cultural and tourism organizations in Son La province ($N > 45$). The results of the preliminary

survey in Son La province showed that all 3 scales and 9 observation variables were reliable enough to be used in an official survey on a larger scale.

+ Official survey: Based on the satisfactory preliminary survey results, the author conducted an official survey with a sample size of $N = 570$ local government leaders at the commune level and leaders of cultural and tourism organizations in the 3 provinces of Vietnam as mentioned ($N > 45$). The survey was conducted on the basis of preliminary interviews and with the consent of the respondents; the results obtained 570/570 valid response forms, achieving a valid response rate of 100%.

Research Results and Discussion

First, the author tested Cronbach' Alpha to identify the reliability of the scales and observed variables in the research model. According to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), the scale ensures reliability when reaching Cronbach'alpha value > 0.6 ; observed variables are reliable when reaching Corrected Item-Total Correlation value > 0.3 . The statistical and testing results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Statistical results and testing results of the scale

Scales	Observed variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. Cultural heritage (CH)	CH1	570	1	5	4.22	.509	.712	CH1 = .648
	CH2	570	1	5	4.17	.514		CH2 = .652
	CH3	570	1	5	4.11	.603		CH3 = .598
2. Indigenous culture (IC)	IC1	570	1	5	4.19	.513	.684	IC1 = .628
	IC2	570	1	5	3.97	.625		IC2 = .533
	IC3	570	1	5	4.06	.546		IC3 = .567
3. Development of community tourism (DCT)	DCT1	570	1	5	4.12	.535	.694	DCT1 = .583
	DCT2	570	1	5	4.11	.686		DCT2 = .578
	DCT3	570	1	5	4.03	.518		DCT3 = .495
Valid N (listwise)		570						

Source: Author's survey results

Data in Table 2 shows that the observed variables of the scale "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC), "Development of community tourism" (DCT) are all rated at an average level of Mean ≥ 3.97 , statistically significant according to the Likert scale (1-5) determined. Accordingly, local government leaders and leaders of cultural and tourism organizations positively assess the advantages of cultural heritage and indigenous culture to develop community tourism. Localities have advantages in historical and cultural relics, scenic spots and traditional culture of residential communities, attracting tourists. Customs and practices of local residential communities are diverse, unique, preserved, attracting tourists. These are favorable conditions for localities to develop community tourism; The development of community tourism helps people develop their personal and household economies, contributing to the protection and preservation of cultural values and promoting local economic and social development. The above survey results are similar to a number of empirical studies in Vietnam, that Vietnam has a lot of potential in terms of natural landscapes, historical values,

indigenous cultures of ethnic groups, customs and lifestyles, and rich culinary cultures of regions, which are the basis for the strong development of community tourism; community tourism is considered a type of tourism that brings the most sustainable economic development benefits to local residents, not only helping people protect ecological resources and the environment, but also preserving and promoting unique local cultural features (Cuong, D.M., 2019).

In particular, the observed variable has the lowest mean value of Mean (IC2) = 3.97, showing that local leaders and cultural and tourism organizations have not yet effectively assessed the exploitation of indigenous cultural advantages to create many attractive community tourism products. Accordingly, localities and communities have not yet optimally exploited indigenous culture, and have not yet created a diversity of traditional products to meet the needs of tourists to learn and experience. This is a limitation that can become a risk to reduce the growth of community tourism in the future; posing requirements for local leaders and communities to promote the development of diverse indigenous cultural products, to both preserve and promote indigenous cultural values, as a foundation to promote sustainable development of community tourism. The above survey results are similar to some empirical studies in Vietnam, that Vietnamese cultural products are still not diverse compared to their potential; they have not met the increasing cultural needs of the people, which has limited the development and breakthrough impact of cultural resources on economic and social development (Hang, C.T., 2021).

From the reliability test results that met the standards, the scales and observed variables continued to be used for exploratory factor analysis to test the research model. The author analyzed exploratory factors with Varimax rotation to preliminarily assess the unidimensionality, convergent value, and discriminant value of the scales to have more basis for drawing research conclusions about the suitability of the initial theoretical model. The results of exploratory factor analysis are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.758
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1986.558
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.580	39.781	39.781	3.580	39.781	39.781	2.787	30.970	30.970
2	2.882	32.024	71.806	2.882	32.024	71.806	2.680	29.777	60.746
3	1.108	12.309	84.115	1.108	12.309	84.115	2.103	23.368	84.115
4	.489	5.431	89.546						
5	.390	4.336	93.882						
6	.196	2.174	96.056						

7	.174	1.929	97.985					
8	.124	1.378	99.363					
9	.057	.637	100.000					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Author's survey results

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix^a				
Scales	Observed variables	Component		
		1	2	3
1. Cultural heritage (CH)	CH1	.811		
	CH2	.810		
	CH3	.796		
2. Indigenous culture (IC)	IC1		.801	
	IC2		.814	
	IC3		.790	
3. Development of community tourism (DCT)	DCT1			.799
	DCT2			.801
	DCT3			.787

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Source: Author's survey results

In quantitative research, according to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), exploratory factor analysis was performed in accordance with the data set through the values: $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level Sig. < 0.05 ; Eigenvalue ≥ 1 ; Total Variance Explained $\geq 50\%$; Factor Loading ≥ 0.5 . Data in Table 3 and Table 4 show that:

- KMO coefficient = $0.758 > 0.5$, confirming that exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the data set; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$, showing that the observed variables have a linear correlation with the representative factor. Total Variance Explained with Cumulative % = $84.115\% > 50\%$ (Table 3), showing that 84.115% of the variation of the representative factors is explained by the observed variables; the observed variables all have Factor Loading > 0.5 (Table 4), showing that the observed variables have good statistical significance. The theoretical research model initially proposed is consistent with the survey research practice.

- The observed variables were extracted into 03 factors corresponding to the 03 initial factors with Eigenvalues > 1 (Table 3), continuing to confirm the suitability of the initial research model. And the initial research model was kept intact, including: 02 independent variables "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC) and 01 dependent variable "Development of community tourism" (DCT) with a total of 9 observed variables with good statistical significance, which can perform multivariate linear regression analysis to examine the relationship of the scales in the model. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 5, which is the basis for the author to draw research conclusions.

Table 5. Multivariate regression results**Coefficients^a**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.095	.201		11.365	.000	
	Cultural heritage (CH)	.548	.392	.576	9.643	.000	1.817
	Indigenous culture (IC)	.434	.306	.468	8.719	.000	1.798

a. Dependent Variable: Development of community tourism (DCT)
Adjusted R Square: 0.752; Durbin-Watson: 2.106

Source: Author's survey results

The data in Table 5 shows:

+ R Square = 0.752, confirming that the scales "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC) explain 75.2% of the variation in the scale "Development of community tourism" (DCT); VIF = 1.817 and VIF = 1.798 ($1 < VIF < 2$), showing that the regression model does not have multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2.106 ($1 < d < 3$), showing that the regression model does not have autocorrelation, confirming that the scales "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC) are independent and have the same impact on the scale "Development of community tourism" (DCT), confirming the suitability of the theoretical research model with the survey data set.

+ The regression coefficients of the two independent variables "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC) are both statistically significant Sig. = 0.000 (Sig. < 0.05) and have positive values: B(CH) = 0.548 and B(IC) = 0.434, confirming the positive relationship between the two independent variables "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC) and 01 dependent variable "Development of community tourism" (DCT); hypotheses H1, H2 are accepted; the initial research model continues to be confirmed to be appropriate.

Based on the generalized regression model of Hair, J.F. et al. (2009): $Y = B_0 + B_1 * X_1 + B_2 * X_2 + \dots + B_i * X_i + e$, the author determined the multivariate regression model of this study as follows: $DCT = 1.095 + 0.548 * CH + 0.434 * IC$

Based on the regression coefficient (B), it can be seen that the correlation level of the independent variables and the dependent variables in decreasing order is: "Cultural heritage" (CH) "Indigenous culture" (IC). That contributes to further confirming the empirical research results in Vietnam, that localities have advantages in historical and cultural relics, scenic spots and traditional culture of residential communities, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism. In addition, the customs and practices of local residential communities are diverse, unique, preserved, attracting tourists, favorable for developing community tourism. However, in specific aspects, localities and residential communities have not optimally exploited indigenous culture, have not created diversity in traditional products to meet the needs of tourists to learn and experience. This is a limitation, which can become a risk to reduce the growth of community tourism in the future; This requires local leaders and communities to promote the development of diverse indigenous cultural products, to both preserve and promote indigenous cultural values, as a foundation for promoting sustainable development of community tourism.

From the above research conclusions, the author suggests a policy issue that localities need to prioritize the development of cultural products to enhance cultural values, becoming important cultural resources to promote tourism economic development. Because cultural resources can transform each other and can be transformed into other resources during use. And when cultural products are exploited and used to develop people's spiritual life; and when exploited and used by people, cultural products turn into other valuable social resources. Vietnam's economy is growing strongly, with a population of 100.3 million people (People's New, 2023), the need to enjoy culture and experience culture through community tourism is increasingly increasing. Therefore, Vietnamese localities need to promote the development of diverse cultural products on the basis of promoting advantages in cultural heritage and indigenous culture, in order to attract tourists.

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